

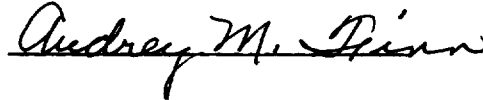
An Examination of Behavioral Reinforcement
Strategies for Classroom Use

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Audrey M. Dinn". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the university name.

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Introduction

To comprehend the enormous challenge facing teachers today is virtually impossible. Few can know of the daily struggle they undertake to engage preoccupied, disinterested, or indifferent students in learning. Teachers are rarely given credit for their diligence and cleverness in generating interest for the subject at hand. Yet, teachers without this concern are often found sowing seeds of boredom and, in turn, reaping the same dullness from their students. All teachers and students alike must understand that the prerequisite for any kind of learning is motivation. There must be motivation to do well on the part of the student, certainly; but there must also be motivation on the part of the teacher who is the model for the students to emulate.

Statement of Purpose

This thesis provides a behavioral approach to classroom motivation that teachers may develop and implement into working strategies within their specific classrooms. It begins by defining several important terms that are used in the science of behaviorism. Next, several basic principles of human behavior are discussed. Building on this foundation, a closer look is given to the study of behavioral modification and how certain behaviors may be shaped. The application of these principles are then enveloped into a practical, behavioral modification strategy called the token economy system.

Basic Principles of Human Behavior

In order to understand how to motivate students for behavior conducive to learning, several terms must first be understood. Motivation is a term used to describe why behavior occurs. It has been defined by most psychologists and educators as something that arouses and instigates behavior, allows a behavior to persist, and leads an individual to choose a particular behavior (Wlodkowski, 1982). Behavior is simply defined as a specific human activity that can be observed and can be agreed upon to have occurred (Martin, 1974). To say that Patrick hates his music lessons is not focusing on his behavior, but is an inference drawn without supportive evidence. But to say, "Patrick sulks every Monday afternoon before, during, and after his violin lesson" is a focused statement on his behavior that might support the inference. Essentially, behavior is anything a person says or does that can be seen or heard by another person. It is useful to concentrate on "observable behaviors" when dealing with students. The teacher becomes a more accurate assessor if a problem exists and can clearly state what is expected of a student in terms that can easily be understood and followed. In addition to this, the teacher is able to objectively criticize the act and not the one performing the act. This greatly reduces any value-laden judgments that may have been formed by the teacher, thus eliminating the destructive self-fulfilling prophecy of student labeling. Parents, teachers, administrators, and others involved in the student's educational life can come to a common agreement that a problem occurs if it has been observed in that student's behavior. The effects of intervention upon a behavioral problem can also be readily observed during and after it has been completed.

The Principles of Shaping Behavior

The old adage, "we all learn through experience" is a wise statement that describes another basic principle of human behavior. Behaviors are learned and are shaped by the external forces (experiences) that accompany them. Keller (1974) stated that "behavior is a function of its consequences." If an undesirable behavior occurs and is followed by undesirable consequences, the frequency of that behavior occurring again is decreased. On the other hand, a pleasant result following a specific behavior will strengthen the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated. This process of shaping behavior by its consequences is called behavioral modification. The techniques of behavioral modification stem from laboratory research in a field known as experimental psychology. Behavioral modification is any kind of intervention aimed at altering the present behavior of an individual (Bannatyne, 1973). Behavior can either be increased, decreased, or maintained through the use of behavioral modification, also known as contingency management.

Reinforcement

Reinforcement is the use of consequences which follow a behavior as quickly as possible for the purpose of increasing that behavior in the future. There are two basic categories into which all reinforcers are placed: unconditioned and conditioned. An unconditioned or primary reinforcer obtains its reinforcing power through biological means and is reinforcing within itself. For example, most children and adolescents are "naturally" attracted to popcorn and pizza, especially if they are hungry. No conditioning is needed to make them enjoy the

reinforcing power of such delicacies. Conditioned reinforcers are those reinforcers that are not naturally stimulating within themselves. They have gained their reinforcing power through previous association with other reinforcers. An example of this is a child's need for the social reinforcement of parental praise. A young child learns to associate praise with the warm smile or hug that immediately follows it. Praise becomes a powerful reinforcer within itself because of the previous associations the child has with it (Martin, 1988). It often becomes much more difficult to offer a conditioned social reinforcer to a child who is unloved at home or feels himself to be unloved (Bannatyne, 1973). This is often because the previous associations either do not exist or were not sufficiently reinforcing for the child. He may find it difficult to trust the sincerity of the teacher's praise if he rarely was praised at home or the praise had been followed by physical abuse. Another example of conditioned reinforcement is the letter grade "A", which becomes a greatly powerful reinforcer to many students because of the previous experiences they have had with it in the past. The token economy system, which will be discussed in detail later, is another example of a conditioned reinforcer. Much of the conditioning for a token economy program must be accomplished within the classroom shortly before the program's implementation.

Contingencies

The relationship between a behavior and its consequence is called a contingency. A contingency is similar to the cause-effect relationship between two events; if one occurs, the other will most certainly follow. There are four principle contingencies that can be used to modify behavior in the classroom. They are avoidance, punishment,

positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement contingencies (Malott, 1972).

Avoidance Contingency

An avoidance contingency is one in which a desired behavior is chosen to avoid an adverse consequence. An example of an avoidance contingency is a situation involving, a rather typical college junior majoring in finance. Sharon puts off studying for her final exam in economics until the night before the test, at which time she "crams" six chapters of supply-side economics in an all-night, last-ditch effort at a passing grade. Her reason for finally choosing to study the night before the exam is to avoid the imminent "F" she would have received had she not studied.

Punishment Contingency

When a behavior is decreased through the use of punishment, the principle of a punishment contingency has been exercised (Malott, 1972). Jeremy is notorious for leaning back on two legs of his chair in a dangerously precarious position. In order to avoid a calamity, Mrs. Brown asks him to sit on the floor each time he is caught leaning back in his chair. This is viewed as punishment by Jeremy and his seventh grade peers. Mrs. Brown soon notices a decrease in Jeremy's undesirable behavior and soon it disappears altogether.

Positive Reinforcement Contingency

The positive reinforcement contingency uses positive experiences, such as praise or material rewards, immediately following a desirable behavior. The result is the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated. This type of contingency reinforcement is the most common and

seems to have the greatest effect on students in the classroom. Martin (1988) states that positive reinforcement is the "single most important part of the learning process." A private violin teacher noticed that her nine-year-old Nathan was quickly losing interest in his lessons for the past few weeks. Although he usually is fairly proficient on his violin, Nathan has slipped back into his old habits of pointing his violin to the floor and sloppily racing through his pieces. Desperate to gain back his former enthusiasm, his teacher bought a bag of gummy worms candy and told him that he would get a surprise only if he had learned his pieces by the next lesson. Nathan's next lesson was flawless and he left the lesson with a worm and a word of praise for each piece learned. This is an example of positive reinforcement. An incentive (candy worms) was given to reinforce desirable behavior (learning his music) and the likelihood that the target behavior (careful practicing) would be repeated was increased.

Negative Reinforcement Contingency

The fourth principle contingency is the negative reinforcement contingency. It must not be confused with punishment because the term "negative" is used. Negative reinforcement is simply the removal of something unpleasant. The term "negative" is used because the consequence of a particular behavior is removed; the term "reinforcement" is used because the purpose is the increase of the behavior's frequency in the future. If a teacher sternly orders a noisy class to be quiet and it works, it is likely that the teacher will use the same tactics again to quiet the class. The key to this kind of reinforcement is to learn how to remove something unpleasant without allowing oneself to become unpleasant (Martin, 1974).

Four Intrinsic Motivators

The behavioral approach to motivation would be incomplete without giving attention to the internal aspects of motivational learning. Fairly recently, many behaviorist (called "neobehaviorists") have broadened their views to include more intrinsic and unobservable means of motivation. Albert Bandura, a renown behaviorist, led the research that broadened the behaviorist's approach. The four intrinsic motivators that were added to the neobehaviorist's list are an individual's expectations, intentions, anticipation, and self-evaluation. The expectancies of a student motivates him or her to ask the question, "What will I get out of this?" The behavior is then directed to coincide with the answer. A student's behavior may also be driven by intentions. For example, a student may say, "I want to finish this task so I can do something else." Intentions direct behavior and help the student meet particular goals that have been set. A third intrinsic motivator is anticipation. A student anticipates the magnitude as well as the outcome of a task and then directs his or her behavior accordingly. The statement, "tailoring a suit jacket takes too much time, so I won't do it" is an example of a person anticipating time involvement and choosing a behavior based on that anticipation. Finally, the neobehaviorists added self-evaluation as intrinsic motivation that directs behavior. When a particular task is presented to a student, the student first evaluates the task and then evaluates his or her own ability in completing that task. On the basis of this self-evaluation, a behavior is chosen and the student either begins or rejects the task. "I am not good at giving speeches, so I will not run for class president" is a statement exemplifying how self-evaluation can determine a student's behavior (Woolfolk, 1984). The fact that these four intrinsic

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sic determinants of behavior exist cannot be proved by behavioral observation. However, each seems to play a significant driving role in some students' behavior and should not be discouraged by the classroom teacher. When using behavioral modification in the classroom, these intrinsic motivators may be invisibly present in certain students and should be encouraged to co-exist with the external reinforcement being offered in the classroom.

Outlining Goals and Objectives

Before beginning the process of behavior modification, several important points should be considered. The one doing the behavioral intervention, namely teachers, must clearly understand and outline the goals and objectives concerning student behavior. The intervener must examine his or her motives for wanting a specific behavior change in a student (Bannatyne, 1973). The first step is to determine what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable and link them in observable behavior pairs. For example, what does a student need to do to let you know he or she is being:

Respectful

1. Listening to the teacher when directions are being given.
2. Listening to fellow classmates when they contribute to class discussions.
3. Getting along with lab partners.
4. Cooperating with clean-up in lab sessions by completing a previously-assigned list of jobs.

Disrespectful

1. Talking while the teacher is giving directions.
2. Interrupting fellow classmates when they are talking.
3. Fighting with lab partners.
4. Making lab partners complete his/her own previously-assigned list of clean-up jobs.
(Machi, 1975)

The teacher should list both desirable and undesirable student behaviors in behavior pairs, using this list as a frame of reference when selecting the target behaviors that need to be modified. This list can by no means be completely tailored to the individual student, since students are so vastly different in their behaviors. The list should serve as a guide in determining what general behaviors are expected of each student. It would be profitable to hand out a list of these behaviors in the class rules early in the term. The rules ought to include the appropriate behaviors as well as the inappropriate behaviors and their consequences. The behavior pairs exist in a dichotomous relationship, which means that they have been divided into opposite parts. Some dichotomous behavior and attitudes are listed below.

DESIRABLE

Truthful
Punctual
Helpful
Diligent
Motivated
Sharing
Peaceful
Obedient
Organized
Law-abiding

UNDESIRABLE

Untruthful
Tardy
Hindrance
Lazy
Disinterested
Selfish
Violent
Disobedient
Disorganized
Criminal

(Adapted from Bannatyne, 1973)

Each attitude or behavior should be further described in behavioral terms so that the behavior may be observed. If being disruptive has been listed as an undesirable behavior, a list of observable behaviors that are considered undesirable should be listed beneath it. For example, behaviors that exhibit being disruptive would include slamming one's books on the desk, running and shouting in the hallways, throwing spitballs and paper wads, and talking while the teacher is giving instructions (Nielson, 1982).

The Process of Behavior Modification

Once the intervener's motives for altering the student's behavior have been closely examined and the goals and objectives have been set, the process of behavior modification may begin. Essentially, the process is divided into three major components: 1) The Selection Process; 2) The Implementation Process; and 3) The Evaluation Process. This simple process is the basis for all behavioral modification strategies.

The Selection Process

In the initial stage of behavioral modification, the intervener must select the behavior to be modified and pair it with an appropriate consequence. This is probably the most difficult stage and must be given a sufficient amount of careful time in planning. Before a behavior is selected, it must be carefully observed and recorded according to its specificity, frequency, desirability, and priority (Machi, 1975). Here is where a teacher's decision-making ability is most crucial. If a student exhibits several behavior problems, the teacher must decide which problem takes priority over all the others to begin modifying first.

After this decision has been made and the target behavior has been selected, the next step in the selection process is to choose an appropriate contingency. One of the four principle contingencies is chosen depending on whether the aim is to decrease or increase the target behavior. Positive and negative reinforcement contingencies are used to increase the target behavior; punishment and avoidance contingencies are used to decrease the target behavior.

If a reinforcer is chosen to increase a desirable behavior, the consequences should follow several specifications:

1. It must be readily available so that it may be presented immediately following the behavior. A delay in the reinforcement significantly reduces the effect on behavioral change (Englander, 1986).
2. It must be such that it can be used to reinforce the target behavior regularly, consistently, and without disturbance to the class' activities. Englander (1986) suggests that the most practical, easily obtainable, and least disturbing consequences are consumable, social, and object reinforcers.
3. Finally, an appropriate consequence to reinforce a desirable target behavior should be one that is desired by the students and acceptable to the teacher (Englander, 1986). The best way to determine if a particular consequence will be reinforcing to the students is to observe what they do in their free time. The Premack Principle states that if there are two behaviors and one is more probable than the other, the more probable behavior may be used to reinforce the less frequent behavior (Mikulas, 1972). For example, the students have five free minutes while the teacher takes role and hands back graded assignments. The teacher notices what they do during this free time - socializing and writing notes to their friends in other classes. Using the Premack Principle, the teacher could use their free-time behavior as a reinforcer for increasing their motivation in class activities. If they are motivated to be cooperative in ways that are clearly explained, the teacher will allow them eight minutes of free-time at the end of class.

The Implementation Process

The implementation process begins with a presentation of the plan with the class and ends when the plan has been completed. First, the plan must be presented and discussed with the students. They must understand, as in the class rules, what is the acceptable and unacceptable behavior and what the consequences are of each. Also, the teacher should explain why the unacceptable behavior is undesirable or offensive (Englander, 1986).

Once the students demonstrate a clear understanding of the plan, it may be set into motion by the teacher. As the target behaviors occur, they should be reinforced immediately and paired with social reinforcement. Verbally precise acknowledgment that the desired behavior has occurred should be given regularly at first. The teacher precisely stated the desired behavior when she said, "Thank you, Sue, for politely raising your hand before speaking."

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process occurs before, during, and after the implementation of the plan by means of observing specified behavior. Careful observation is the most accurate measure of student behavior to determine how the plan is working. Observations should concentrate on the specificity and frequency of the target behavior to see if it is being appropriately reinforced (Machi, 1975). Once the desired behavior occurs regularly and consistently, the reinforcer should be gradually faded out in frequency while the social reinforcement is increased. Social reinforcement should remain once the behavior has been modified and the initial reinforcer has been completely removed. The success of the reinforcement program should be evaluated

by continuing to monitor the desired behavior to make sure it remains. Occasionally a "shot-in-the-arm" reinforcer should be administered if student "burn-out" is observed.

This simple process of behavioral modification can be applied to a variety of strategies for use in the classroom. Some of these strategies are social reinforcement, classroom rules with stated consequences, contingency contracts, vicarious reinforcement, and the token economy (reinforcement) system (Yen, 1976). An examination of the token reinforcement program follows with suggestions on how to implement it in the classroom.

The Token Reinforcement Program

A token economy is a conditioned reinforcement strategy in which students receive tokens at fixed and variable intervals for the reinforcement of specific target behaviors (Yen, 1976). Tokens are any tangible object or symbol that can be exchanged for a desired reinforcer (Martin, 1974). Token economies can be used for the purpose of increasing student motivation and performance levels in the classroom. Although the token reinforcement should be administered by the teacher, it may, in part, be self-administered by the student and monitored by the teacher. The token economy program uses either positive or negative reinforcement contingencies. In positive token reinforcement, students earn tokens that may either be reinforcing within themselves or exchanged for another incentive at a later time. Negative token reinforcement takes tokens away in a response cost to increase desirable behavior and decrease undesirable behavior.

Token economy systems are used in a wide variety of settings. They have been successfully used to reduce disruptive behaviors, increase student motivation and have lead to greater academic achievement in a variety of school settings (Woolfolk, 1984). Token systems can be molded to meet the needs of individuals in almost any setting. Token economies have been successfully administered in a variety of educational settings, ranging from preschool to graduate school. In addition to this, they have been widely successful in various work settings, in psychiatric wards, in classrooms for the mentally handicapped, in homes or institutions for delinquent adolescents, in nursing homes and hospitals, in county jails and federal prisons, and in homes

engaged in child rearing (Martin, 1988). With a knowledge of the behavioral modification principles and a knowledge of the internal mechanism of the token economy system, a conscientious teacher with ingenuity and intelligence can tailor such a program to meet the needs of any classroom situation.

There are several distinct advantages to using the token economy system within the classroom. It is often difficult to recognize and reinforce all the students in the class when they need it. the token system allows regular reinforcement to occur for the students, whose achievements often would otherwise go unnoticed. The tokens can be given immediately and consistently following the desired behavior. This increases the likelihood that a desired behavior will reoccur. Varying the types of reinforcers for which tokens may be exchanged adds student interest, increasing their motivation in the classroom activities.

Some other distinct advantages of using a token economy system in educational settings are the lessons the students are taught through the use of an economy system. Students learn how to delay their own gratification as they save their tokens for future back-up reinforcers; this delaying of gratification is a valuable lesson within itself. The students also learn the subject of basic economics as they observe basic banking principles and currency flow in action (Martin, 1974). Token salaries and wages can be earned from student "employment", tokens can be charged for desk rental, interest can be charged if a student must borrow tokens or a pencil, and other activities can be added to further teach principles of economics within the classroom. Students learn the organizational processes of keeping records, plan-

ning "financially" for the future, and become better able to decide their course of action based on goal-setting and planning. The token economy can be used as a means by which some of the realities of life are learned.

Setting up a Token Economy System

The initial steps to setting up a token economy system follow the same procedures for setting up any behavior modification program. The target behavior and the appropriate contingencies must first be selected. The teacher should list his or her long and short-range goals for the desirability of specific student behaviors. Careful observations are then to be conducted and recorded by the teacher. The objectives as to which behaviors should be targeted first are arranged in order of their priority. Those objectives that are of highest priority and are prerequisites for later objectives should be selected. The teacher is then able to identify the target behavior that is to be modified (Englander, 1986).

The next step is to assess the current performance level of each student for the specified target behavior. This is done through observations which assess how much of the student's behavior needs to be modified (Martin, 1988). The teacher now has a reference point from which process may proceed on the student's individual level. Having targeted the behavior to be changed and assessing each student's needs, the teacher is ready to begin the selection of the reinforcers.

When using the token economy program, both the tokens and the back-up reinforcers for which they are exchanged must be selected. A token can be most any tangible object or symbol that can be exchanged for a desired material reward, activity, or privilege. Tokens should be

attractive to the students, lightweight, portable, not easily counterfeited, easily stored, and adequate in number for students. Initially, there should be at least 100 tokens per student engaging in the program (Martin, 1988). Accessories for storing tokens (small boxes, bags, or purses) should also be made available for the students. Almost anything that fits the above criteria can be used as a token. They may be as simple as a chart on the wall with checkmarks or points. Some examples of types of tokens that may be used are:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| * Play Money | * Initials on a Card |
| * "Bankbooks" | * Plastic Chips |
| * Stars or Stamps | * Punch Card |
| * "Checks" | * Checkmarks |
| * Points | * Smiling Faces |

After the type of token has been selected, the teacher should decide on several effective back-up reinforcers. A back-up reinforcer is the major incentive for which the tokens are exchanged. It must be something that would be valuable enough to the students for it to be reinforcing. In some token systems, the accumulation of tokens alone is the only reinforcement given. Token reinforcement, used without back-up reinforcers, works most effectively with younger students and highly competitive students (Woolfolk, 1986). The greater the number and variety of back-up reinforcers from which the students may choose, the greater the students' enthusiastic participation in the program. Part of the following information on types of reinforcement was taken from lists provided by Englander (1986) and Martin (1974).

Consequences for Reinforcement in the Token Economy System

Consumable Reinforcers

These are simply edible foods or drinks that may be used as reinforcers. These particularly lend themselves to a home economics class, because the facilities and ingredients are readily available. Caution must be taken in giving food for reinforcement. If taken too far, it could bring an undue emphasis on rewarding oneself with food, possibly encouraging obesity in children and adolescents. Consumable reinforcers ought to be foods that are healthful and should be easily prepared. This type of reinforcement might be used in a nutrition and foods class in the form of a "Free-Lab" period or a special party at the end of the term.

Some examples of healthful consumable reinforcers are dried fruits, nuts, popcorn, fruit, juices, milk and milk products, and baked products. Occasionally, the teacher may offer sweets for a consumable reinforcer. Examples of sweets would include candies, cookies, and softdrinks.

Activity Reinforcers

These provide the most fertile possibilities for the educational environment in which a variety of learning experiences are used. One of the advantages of using an activity to reinforce behavior is that it can be educational without the student being "turned-off" by it. There are at least seven specific types of activities that can be used as reinforcers.

* In-class relaxation or quiet time: Students are given the

opportunity to quietly read, rest, study, or write a letter to a friend.

* **Audiovisual Activities:** These activities may be used to reinforce the behavior of the entire class or of certain deserving individuals. These activities would include VCR movies (after-school specials are an excellent source of educational entertainment); films, and listening to records, tapes, or the radio. If students finish a project early, many school libraries have audiovisual rooms where they can use the equipment without disturbing the ongoing class activity.

* **Recreational Activities:** This type of reinforcer may be used for the entire class or for individuals within the class. Students may be allowed time-out to talk with a friend, time to play a favorite game (there are many educational games available for this purpose), or a party at the end of the term.

* **Privileges:** This activity reinforcer is particularly useful for students engaged in token economy systems. A student may be selected to help the teacher run an errand, take roll, or help with the operation of media equipment. A teacher must be careful not to take away a privilege that is already owned by all students in order to give it to a "deserving" few.

* **Special Field Trips:** This activity can be particularly enjoyable and educational for the students. It can be used to supplement the subject matter in the class. It can also be used to broaden the perspectives of students concerning their community and what can be learned from it. A field trip can only be used as a reinforcer if the entire class deserves it and they agree this is how they choose to use their tokens.

* **Informal Group Discussions:** This activity allows the students

to with each other specific topics that they find interesting. They may discuss a recent movie, current events, or any other topic that lends itself to the group discussion. The teacher should be the discussion monitor to make sure the discussion is worthwhile and all students are given the chance to contribute.

Possessions

Tangible objects may be used as back-up reinforcers for a token economy system. The objects may be recreational, personal, or school-oriented. School supplies may be donated from the school bookstore and might include notebook paper, pencils, pens, school spirit buttons, and other inexpensive items. Recreational possessions could be collected from local business donations and from other sources. Examples of recreational possessions would include bike locks, sports equipment, fishing equipment, toys, games, music tapes, puzzles, books, and posters. Personal objects, such as combs, jewelry, and hair clips might also be obtained from donations.

Obtaining Back-up Reinforcers

One of the factors in the selection of back-up reinforcers is where they will be obtained. There is a wealth of items for donation from local businesses, parents, the school, community groups, other teachers, and former students. Once the back-up reinforcers have been selected, the teacher then decides how they will be dispensed. An "auction" or "sale" at the end of the term is one time that tokens can be exchanged for back-up reinforcers. Throughout the term the classroom "commissary", possibly the teacher's desk, can be used for more frequent token exchanges. The teacher should keep inventory of the demand on specific reinforcers for future reference.

Reinforcers to Accompany Token Reinforcement

Two strong reinforcers that should be used in conjunction with the token economy are the use of honors recognition and social reinforcement. These are not to be used as back-up reinforcers that can be "purchased" with tokens. Honors recognition uses strong reinforcement for outstanding student achievement. A teacher may award students with letters of praise to parents or with an announcement read over the public address system. One highly visible reinforcement is that of a bulletin board with pictures honoring the meritorious students.

Social reinforcers cannot be given for token exchange, but should be given along with token and back-up reinforcement. As the student is "weaned" from the behavior modification program and reinforcement becomes less frequent, the frequency of social reinforcement should increase. Social reinforcers may be given verbally or nonverbally. Verbal social reinforcement may be a word of praise or a simple pleasant conversation between the teacher and students. Another way to verbally reinforce student behavior is through the use of descriptive phrases when calling on them in class: "Mary, you look like you really know the answer!" is an example of social reinforcement. Written comments on student papers is another effective social reinforcer that a teacher can use. The use of written praise should be sincere and varied to the individual student. A very strong social reinforcer is a note of praise sent home to a student's parents. Another social reinforcer is the use of physical expressions, such as nodding and smiling, using applause, and giving a well-deserved pat on the back (Englander, 1986).

Tips for Teachers

Finally, there are several additional suggestions for teachers who are implementing a token reinforcement program in their classrooms. They should be sure that the reinforcers are made contingent on the performance of the desired behavior. This must be done objectively through careful observation. Reinforcement must not be given on a group basis, unless all have earned it. The teacher should clearly explain the program and specify well in advance how the tokens will be earned. Success through the token economy system should be accessible to each student since the program is tailored to their individual needs. The most important rule for implementing a successful token economy program is to be consistent with every student in all fairness (Malott, 1972).

Application of Token System to Home Economics

Home economics classes easily lend themselves to the token economy system. Much of the classroom experiences are clearly observable and the subjects offer a wide range of learning experiences. A token economy system can be implemented into any area of home economics and can be used for different purposes. The token system can be offered for the sole purpose of motivating students to learn. The dual purpose of motivating and teaching a specific lesson can also be implemented. For example, in a consumer education class in which students learn principles of money management, the token system can be used to motivate students in their learning and to give them "token" experience with money management. Whatever the purposes are, the use of the token system is only limited to the teacher's creativity and ability to make learning exciting.

A token economy system may be applied to each home economics classroom in countless ways. It may range from a most simple one-day token encounter to a full term of token reinforcement. The following table gives a few suggestions on how one might use token reinforcement in each area of home economics. Any token and back-up reinforcers that are of consumable interest to the student and meet the criteria listed above may be used. The ideas for token use are virtually limitless.

Conclusion

The use of behavior modification can have an enormous impact on the motivation of students in their school performances. The effective use of external stimuli can give a student a clear reason for doing the best work possible. Once experience has taught the student that it is possible for him or her to have the behavior that leads to successful learning, the student can confidently attempt future learning situations with new-found enthusiasm.

Suggested Token Economies for the Home Economics Subject Areas

Subject Area	Target Behavior	Back-up Reinforcers	Tokens
NUTRITION & FOODS			
	Cooperation in lab	Party, Free	"coupons"
	Following instructions	labs, recipes	play \$
	Dieting, exercise,	teen magazines,	any
	weight control program	posters, any	
	Placement of kitchen	other item of	
	utensils	interest.	
	Clean-up		
CONSUMER EDUCATION			
	Money Management	Items sold in	play \$
	(saving, spending	auction at years	checks
	checking, delaying	end, for which	
	wants for needs,	students budget	
	paying bills, plan-		
	ning a budget)	Any item of	
	Time Management	consumable interest	
	(getting to class	to students	
	on time; turning in		
	work on time)		
TEXTILES & CLOTHING			
	Clothing Construction	Sewing supplies	any
	(Grading details)	Free patterns	
	Time plans	Style show party	
	Each day's work plan		
	Sample work		
FAMILY RELATIONS & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT			
	Divide class up into	Special activity	any
	"families"; reinforce		
	behavior that is con-		
	ducive to healthy family		
	relations (i.e. Communication)		
HOUSING & INTERIOR DESIGN			
	Reinforce the projects	Special activity	any
	either at end or after		
	each step is completed		
	Diminsion Plan		
	Furniture Plan		
	Elevations Samples		
	Time Plans		
	Each day's work plan		

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